

*Peter
McMahon's*

SWIM FACTORY


1 Martin Street,
Woodend,
Ipswich Q. 4305

Tel: (07) 3812-2923
Fax: (07) 3812-1284

PARENT INFORMATION

**WATERBABIES B1
STARFISH B2
STEPPING STONES
TADPOLES**

Teaching a child to swim takes commitment, knowledge, patience, understanding and love. Teaching a child takes time- please allow us this time to enable your child to be a happy water confident swimmer. We have outlined a short summary of what we at the Swim Factory will be teaching you as a parent to assist in your child's progress.

NOTE: THE AGES SUGGESTED ARE A GUIDELINE ONLY e.i. A two and a half year old child goes into a Stepping Stone class if the swim teacher has assessed the child to their ability and the child is a ready Participant to be in the water without a parent.

WATERBABIES (B1)

5months – 16months

A young baby who still has little voluntary movement on land can start to experience a wide range of movement – with lots of stimulation sensations, all of which reinforce the learning process. The colour, movement and smiling faces are very strong stimulus to develop babies' visual processing centres and the rhythm, laughter, splashing and variations in voice tone will stimulate the auditory centre in babies' brain. From birth, children are carefully watching adult faces to imitate and the more often they're exposed to happy, smiling, positive social interaction, the more positively they will develop in their own social and interpersonal skills. (Julie Zancanaro, Bapp.S.C.O.T.).

Babies are born with a natural grasp reflex. They will instinctively grasp and hold on tight to fingers, toys, clothing, and hair. In the swimming lesson we want to try to maintain the baby's grasp reflex. In doing so, we build strength, independence and teach baby's to support their own body weight. These gripping activities play an integral role in teaching children a respect for the water.

Our aim is to teach children to pull up independently on an adult's t-shirt, fingers or side of the pool, with the ultimate goal of having the child climb out of the pool. This is a skill which may one day save their life. T-shirts are a great teaching aid. Here the baby can easily grip and support their body weight provided that the adult stays low in the water. This simple activity teaches children from a very early age to pull themselves out of the water to safety. Always remember to pay attention to your child and ensure they are not drinking the water.





As children's strength improves parents can encourage them to hold on to a deck level pool or a pool with higher sides. Parents should begin by supporting the baby's bottom with their knee or hand. Once baby grips the wall they can be allowed to practice on their own for short periods of time. Parents must be in attendance at all times in case baby falls under water. If this happens, remain calm, gently pick them up and reassure them that everything is okay. As children become stronger and once they have mastered holding onto the wall, we encourage them to monkey along the pool's edge. Monkeying requires children to move along the wall hand over hand. This is great for their independence and mobility in the water. In the initial stages parents will need to assist these hand movements.

Leaving toys around the pool may entice an unsupervised child into the pool area. When performing all the aforementioned activities it is important to remember to be actively supervising your child. No child is safe in the water unless being supervised by an adult.

Breath control is an essential element in the learn-to-swim process. By teaching children breath control we make first submersion free from fuss and trauma. Teaching breath control to babies from 0-2 years is best done by conditioning. Here we prepare babies for their first under water experience by conditioning them to react and hold their breath in response to the verbal conditioning trigger, "Ready (Name) Go!" Because the water runs quickly, smoothly and evenly down the forehead, baby should not ingest any water. With daily practice baby will soon react positively to these "trigger words" by being happy and confident with water on the face and closing their eyes on the trigger. Once the teacher or parent notices this positive reaction, baby is ready for their first submersion, the teacher will assist you in the steps for this. They are coerced in a gentle manner. You will gently lift up your baby and then take them slowly under the water.

A number of repetitive drills are performed within the lesson to allow the children to take in the task given at their own rate. The swim teacher will show a progression of these skills step by step to the parent. Remember children have receptive periods and responsive periods. Allow them to enjoy themselves and progress at their OWN rate. Initial self-propulsion is slow because physical growth and mental strength really determine how a baby moves through water.

Swimming hints for parents for WATERBABIES AND STARFISH: -

1. Parents/carer accompanying the baby must wear a T-shirt.
2. Please do not feed your little baby prior to the lesson (at least one hour prior).
3. Any concerns you may have, speak to the teacher prior to the lesson or if you need to speak in length then a phone call to you may be arranged with the appropriate person.

At first you may feel there are a lot of steps to follow in the lesson, but as weeks go by you will become very familiar with the lesson plan. Infants also start to show signs of knowing when blowing bubbles or splashing their hands coming up into the lesson. OBSERVE other parents when the teacher is busy with another parent but please speak to the teacher when you feel you need guidance.



STARFISH (B2)

16months - 2 ½ years

The lesson is incorporating positive reinforcement with aspects of further independence of each swimmer – circuits will be introduced in these lessons enabling stimulation, movement and laughter within the aquatic lesson. Repetition is the key element to the lesson in learning tasks given. Remember how long it takes to teach a baby to wave, or how long it takes to toilet train a young child. Showing the same patience with your children's swimming allows them to enjoy themselves and progress at their own rate. Parents should always keep in mind that we must take each step slowly first and proceed onto the progression of skill when the swimmer is good and ready for it. The swim teacher will guide in these areas.

Independence in the learn-to-swim lesson is very important. By encouraging independence we are trying to teach children their limitations, boundaries and in turn a respect for the water. The child's ability to participate in independent activities will be determined by their physical development.

When children are very young, independence can be encouraged by holding them softly in the water and allowing them to feel their own buoyancy. Once children become mobile, independence may be encouraged by giving children an opportunity to crawl on a shallow ledge. As children continue to grow with age and ability, independence takes the form of encouraging children to play and strike out on their own. But be warned, no child is safe in or around water, unless being actively supervised by an adult within arms reach. Always remember that your body language will rub off on your little one, so stay calm and relaxed. Finally use coloured toys, objects or noises to distract your baby, and make bath time fun and stimulating.

STEPPING STONES (STEP)

2 ½ years – 3 years

These swimmers are children who have, for certain reasons, have to be without their parent in the water and will be taken in a class of four students with the swim instructor. Again this lesson encourages the practice of stimulation, laughter and positive social interaction. This class develops the swimmer through further independence and enjoyment in the aquatic environment. Repetition of skills is the one aspect of the program that will assist your child in water awareness. From this step the swimmer will develop to the next stage of Tadpoles. The swim teacher will assess your child over a period of time to ascertain if they are ready for this area. Some children may be very good in their lesson but must be ready to take on the new skills in the tadpoles, which is very different in cases of independence and being able to follow the instruction given by the teacher. Do not be too hasty.

It is important at this stage for these little swimmers to learn they do not enter the water until invited by the teacher. This is why "READY NAME GO" is an imperative learning tool in Baby 2 (Starfish).



TADPOLES (TADS)

3years - 3 ½ years



These children are quite competent in certain skills and the swim factory instructors have assessed them to be at this level. They will learn progressions of independence in the water and enjoyment within the program. The children learn further skills using the kick board etc for progressive drills to get them acquainted with the Level 2 area. The swimmers now have to understand certain drills and also their attention within the class needs to be addressed so that we prepare them for the next stage.

Please read through all these stages in your child's progression in Aquatic Education.

Important Components Are:

- Back Floating
- Breath Control
- Propulsion

THESE TIMES ARE PRECIOUS FOR YOU AS A PARENT AS WELL AS US AS TEACHERS TO BE A PART OF YOUR CHILDRENS' MILESTONES AND THEIR WATER AWARENESS – THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST IN US IN HELPING YOU.

